

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2010

Mr. Jonathan Coppess
Administrator
Farm Service Agency
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

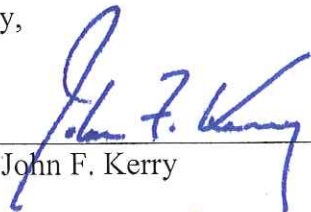
Dear Administrator Coppess:

We are writing to you regarding a troublesome staffing situation concerning the Farm Loan Program (FLP) that was brought to our attention by our constituents. As you know, the Rhode Island based USDA team has shared responsibility since 2003 to administer the Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan programs for both the state of Rhode Island, and Bristol and Norfolk counties in Massachusetts. However, the Rhode Island USDA has recently declared that it will no longer provide this service in Massachusetts.

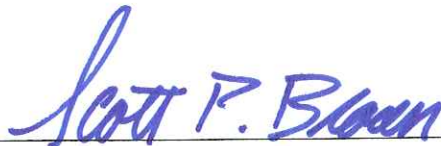
There was no approval for this action from the FSA National Office, and for the next two weeks none of the Rhode Island FLP staff reported for work in the Bristol county office causing a major disruption in service. The Massachusetts Director contacted his Rhode Island counterpart and advised her that the FLP team should report to work at its assigned Massachusetts duty stations. However, the Rhode Island FLM indicated it would not comply. On March 10, 2010 the Massachusetts FSA submitted a plan for reorganization for Massachusetts in order to better serve the farmers in Bristol and Norfolk counties due this recent service shutdown.

Our constituents in Bristol and Norfolk counties have an equal right to assistance, and we find this situation completely unacceptable. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to address this issue immediately and restore service to Bristol and Norfolk counties. Thank you for your consideration and we eagerly await your reply.

Sincerely,



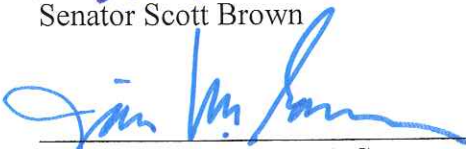
Senator John F. Kerry



Senator Scott Brown



Congressman Barney Frank



Congressman James McGovern



Congressman William Delahunt